Beyond Convention, Beyond Critique: Toward a Third Way of Preparing Educational Leaders to Promote Equity and Social Justice

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C O N N E X I O N S

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Beyond Convention, Beyond Critique: Toward a Third Way of Preparing Educational Leaders to Promote Equity and Social Justice (Part 1)[1]

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1.1 Introduction

"Yes, a violent quarrel was in progress. There was shouting, bangings on the table, sharp suspicious glances, furious denials….Twelve voices were shouting in anger, and they were all alike. No question, now, what had happened to the faces of the pigs. The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which." (Orwell, 1996, p. 141)

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[1]This content is available online at <http://cnx.org/content/m43701/1.4/>.

[2]http://www.ncpeapublications.org/latest-issue-ijelp.html

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CHAPTER 1. BEYOND CONVENTION, BEYOND CRITIQUE: TOWARD A
THIRD WAY OF PREPARING EDUCATIONAL LEADERS TO PROMOTE
EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (PART 1)

I begin this article with a brief overview of the need for preparation programs to address equity and social justice. Next, I discuss the conventional approach to leadership preparation, three historical characteristics of that approach, and why each of these characteristics works against addressing equity and social justice. I then describe the critical approach, acknowledge the contributions that critical theory and related research have made to the knowledge of inequity in our schools, but also critique critical theory regarding its deficit thinking, self-certainty, an antagonism toward other belief systems, and argue that critical theory by itself is not an appropriate approach to leadership preparation. Herein I propose a *third way* for addressing equity and social justice in principal preparation—a model including seven components. Finally, I discuss implications of the third-way model for practice and research.

1.2 The Need for Equity and Social Justice in Schools

The evidence of inequity in our schools is so compelling that I will provide only a brief overview here. The scores of African American and Latino students are regularly considerably lower than White students' scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests in reading, writing, math, and science (National Center for Educational Statistics (n.d., n.p.). When U.S. African American, Latino, and White students are considered as separate groups in reporting literacy and science scores from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), U.S. White students' mean scores are higher than the scores of students from most other participating countries, but U.S. African American and U.S. Latino students' mean scores are lower than scores of students from nearly all of the same countries (Berliner, 2007).

Compared to White students, African American and Latino students are more likely to be retained, suspended, and expelled, and more likely to drop out of school (Howard, 2010). Only 50-60 percent of African American and Latino students graduate from high school (Hoff, 2008; Howard, 2010; Swanson, 2004a, 2004b). High school dropouts, in turn, have less earning power and are more likely than graduates to live in poverty and become involved in criminal behavior (Boisjoly, Harris, & Duncan 1998; Howard, 2010; Neild, Balfanz, & Herzog, 2007).

The causes of the achievement gap between White, middle class students and students from other cultures are varied. One of those causes is deficit thinking about students of color and low SES.

> There are some disturbing implications of a deficit-based construction of educational underachievement, most notably the belief that mainstream or European culture and ways of being, thinking, and communicating are considered "normal." Consequently, deviations from mainstream forms of verbal and cognitive processing are viewed as dysfunctional, pathological, or inferior. As a result, students who struggle academically are frequently viewed as cognitively, culturally, or linguistically deficient. (Howard, 2010, pp. 39-30)

Students of color and low SES are expected to learn a primarily Eurocentric, middle-class curriculum, despite the fact that these students "come to school with extensive funds of knowledge from their own culture—knowledge that is accessed through interacting with individuals and drawing on resources from supportive networks within the culture" (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2010). A Eurocentric, middle-class curriculum makes the marginalized student's culture irrelevant. "The extant curriculum fails to build on students' skills, knowledge, and cultural background" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 175). The student's culture is seen as a deficit that must be overcome for the sake of learning the Eurocentric, middle-class curriculum (Valenzuela (1999).

A lack of knowledge about other cultures can lead to a number of *cultural clashes* between mainstream educators and students of color and low SES. Different communication styles can lead to miscommunication, with educators mistakenly believing that students do not care about learning or are being disrespectful. Cultural differences also result in over-referral of students to special education programs (De Valenzuela, Copeland, Qi, & Park 2006), with many educators unable to differentiate underachievement due to a disability from underachievement due to cultural clashes (Chamberlain, 2005). A lack of cultural competence also can result in students being mistakenly assigned to lower-level "vocational" tracks as well as under-referral to gifted programs (Banks, 2000).

National, state, and local educational policies tend to weaken schools' capacity to overcome the achievement gap among cultural groups. The federal courts have ended many federally ordered desegregation plans and continue to do so (Frankenberg, Lee, & Orfield, 2003). The federal government's Title I formula results in states that spend more per student receiving more Title I funding than states that spend less per student (Liu, 2006). On average, states spend less money on their highest-poverty districts than their lowest-poverty districts (Wiener & Pristoop, 2006). In many school districts, compared to schools within the district that serve wealthier students, schools that serve large numbers of poor students have higher percentages of out-of-field teachers and more novice teachers, and pay their teachers less (Peske & Haycock, 2006).

The moral imperative to seek equity and social justice should be sufficient, but there is also the practical incentive of our nation's changing demographics. In 2007, 42 percent of the U.S. student population were students of color; by 2035, students of color will be the majority of the student population (Howard, 2010). Changing demographics in the U.S. as well as Western Europe lend credence to Johnson's (2003) proposal that promoting cultural responsiveness should be the "Imperative for the 21st century...where the overarching goal is to foster an ethos, a way of thinking and being, that values human rights, diversity and equity, and ultimately facilitates successful learning for *all* members of the school community" (p.18).

Work for equity and social justice is needed for other cultural groups in addition to students of color and low SES. Gender equity is another concern.

> In many textbooks and other curriculum materials, females are depicted as needy, passive, and subordinate to males. In conventional classrooms, teachers interact more with boys than with girls, and boys tend to control the classroom discussion. Girls are made to believe that they are unable to solve problems on their own, yet they are less likely to receive helpful feedback. (Glickman, et al., 2010, p. 450)

Girls often find it difficult to receive assistance when they are sexually harassed (Fry, 2003; Ormerod, Collingsworth, & Perry, 2008), and teachers who attempt to address gender inequity often are either ignored or encounter hostility from other educators and parents (Fry, 2003). Boys are affected by other types of gender inequity; they are more likely than girls to receive academic remediation and discipline referrals and more likely to be suspended, be expelled, and drop out of school (Kommer, 2006; Taylor & Lorimer, 2003).

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students are another cultural group that needs to be a focus of efforts for equity and social justice. Each school year large numbers of LGBT students are verbally abused and physically assaulted (Whelan, 2006). Many educators ignore harassment of LGBT students or even join in that harassment (Van Wormer & McKinney, 2003). Because of the harassment and resulting stress they experience, LGBT students are absent more often, receive worse grades, are less involved in school activities, and are more likely to drop out of school than heterosexual students (Glimps, 2005; Weiler, 2003; Whelan, 2006). Due to the abuse they experience, LGBT students are more likely to drink alcohol, abuse drugs, and engage in unsafe sex (Glimps, 2005; Van Wormer & McKinney, 2003). Finally, LGBT students are two to three times more likely than heterosexual students to commit suicide (Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006; Van Wormer & McKinney, 2003).

There are, of course, other cultural groups that should be included in the work for equity and social justice—students with disabilities, students belonging to minority religions, and so on. In the final analysis, justice for all of these groups benefits all of humanity. In the words of John Rawls (1963), "if men [and women] did not do what justice requires...They would be incapable of feeling resentment and indignation, and they would be without ties of friendship and mutual trust. They would lack certain elements of humanity" (p. 281). Equity and social justices, then, are educational goals tied directly to the growth and development of all students and, ultimately, our society at large.

Making equity and social justice a reality for all is a daunting task that will require a transformation of school culture and, toward that end, the transformation of principal preparation programs. Brown (2004) asserted, "If future educational leaders are to foster successful, equitable, and socially responsible learning and accountability practices for all students, than substantive changes in educational leadership preparation and professional development programs are required" (p. 80). In the discussion of the conventional approach to educational leadership preparation that follows I will attempt to show that the conventional approach is not capable of bringing about the transformation required to develop leadership for equity and social justice.

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CHAPTER 1. BEYOND CONVENTION, BEYOND CRITIQUE: TOWARD A THIRD WAY OF PREPARING EDUCATIONAL LEADERS TO PROMOTE EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (PART 1)

1.3 The Conventional Approach

The conventional approach is synonymous with what Angus (1996) and Waite (2002) most often call the mainstream approach, although both authors sometimes use the term conventional in describing it. Angus considers the main features of the conventional approach to be "the rational model, positivistic methodology, and the dominance of administrative-technical concerns" (p. 980). Functionalist and interpretive views are considered by Argus to be variations of the conventional approach. The conventional view historically has dominated principal preparation and practice (Angus, 1996; English, 2003; Rusch, 2004; Theorharis, 2010). The conventional approach to research on educational leadership has produced an extensive *science of administration* (knowledge base) to guide leadership preparation and practice that opponents of the conventional approach object to:

> The "knowledge base" and theories which have produced it have not produced leaders, have not improved the nation's schools, nor are they likely to do so. They have replaced vision with technique, moral purpose and heroism with taxonomies of behaviors and skills and lately "best practices" which are grounded on the assumption that there is one best method for discerning the answers that are "out there." (English, 2003, p. 30)

The conventional approach has three general characteristics that cut across leadership preparation and practice: external control, technical rationality, and maintenance of the status quo—all addressed in Angus's (1996) critique of the conventional approach. The following discussion describes the three characteristics, and shows how they work against equity and social justice.

1.3.1 External Control

Angus (1996) argues, "schools have generally promoted the interests of capital and dominant social groups (p. 973). External control of schools by the powerful and wealthy traditionally has worked against equity and social justice (Spring, 1990). The control of schools in the United State by outside groups can be traced all of the way back to colonial times. The first source of control was religion, with the local school controlled by the community's dominant church (Spring, 1990). Curti (1971) argued that significant religious control of public schools continued into the middle of the 19th century.

With the coming of the second industrial revolution in the mid-19th century, business and industry began to exert significant control over public schools. Industry's aim in controlling education was to assure that future workers developed skills for the workplace. Schools began to emulate business and factories in organization, administration, and teaching (Spring, 1990). In the early 20th century the field of educational leadership adopted Taylor's scientific method. "The principals of hierarchical management, scientific study and control of the elements of the organization, selecting and training of individuals for places within the organization and cost efficiency became the focus for the professionalization of public school administration" (Spring, 1990, p. 234). Even in the late 20th century Angus (1996) considered business to be "the dominant metaphor in educational administration" (p. 977), lamenting, "the language of management is external (not natural) to administrators" (p. 969).

The social sciences, first represented by sociologists and psychologists from outside of education and eventually by educational sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists, had significant influence over education and educational leadership in the 20th century. The social control movement of the early 20th century, led by sociologists like Edward Ross (1912) and Ross Finney (1929), preceded mid-century psychological theories like William James' (1950) stimulus-response learning and B.F. Skinner's (1976) operant conditioning. While adapting theories from the social sciences to the leadership preparation curriculum, the administration professoriate also adopted social science methods for its own research and theory building. Social science's greatest influence in educational leadership came during what McCarthy and Kuh (1990) called "the theory movement," which was "grounded in the belief that educational administration is an applied social science, that research should be theory-based, and that administrative phenomena can be investigated" (p.9).

Currently, government is the entity that exhibits the greatest control over education and educational leadership in the United States. Government by definition always has some control over public education,

but traditionally governance has in large part been delegated to local boards of education. The modern era of state control began in the 1960s as states received increased federal funding for education, much of it to be dispersed through state agencies to school districts, with other funding provided to build the administrative capacity of the state agencies (Spring, 1990). Another major increase in state power came in the 1980s after the publication of *A Nation of Risk*. The age of "legislated learning" had begun (Wise 1979, 1988), with the Texas accountability system leading the way (Heilig & Darling-Hammond, 2008). In the early 21st century, federal control of education rivals state control, with NCLB mandating what is basically the Texas accountability system on a national level, and initiatives of the Obama administration extending federal control even further (Camins, 2011; Ramirez, 2010; Starnes, 2012).

Glass (2003) argued that federal and state standards enforced by high-stakes achievement tests have lowered education's capacity to solve social problems:

> Conformity and obedience to standards distorted by dominant ideologies have supplanted independence and the creative transformation of social problems....fixed standards dictate curricula that ignore the depth and range of students' backgrounds and knowledge, and substitute demeaning assessments and labels for teachers' professional judgments. (pp. 164, 165)

Eventually, increased state control worked its way up from PK-12 education, through teacher preparation (Berlak, 2003; Tellez, 2003), to graduate programs in educational leadership (Militello, Gajda, & Bowers, 2009; Roach, Smith, & Boutin, 2010). This increased control took the form of state certification standards and corresponding tests. The control of principal preparation now seems to be gradually shifting from the state to the federal level through the ISLLC standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008) and national tests based on the standards like the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) and The Praxis Educational Leadership: Administration and Supervision Test (both developed by ETS).

Although state and national government presently constitute the most powerful source of external control, the other sources of control discussed earlier still are present to varying degrees. For example, business interests were strong supporters of the accountability movement (Business Round Table, 1996, 2001, 2002) and continue to exercise considerable influence over education (Sawchuk, 2009). Professors of educational leadership and the readings and learning activities they assign still apply social science theory to educational leadership. And in my home state of Texas members of the religious right, with significant numbers in the state legislature and on the state board of education, exert considerable influence over schools and universities (see, for example, Blanchette, 2010).

1.3.2 Technical Rationality

Angus (1996) argues that the literature on educational administration "encourages scholars and practitioners alike to think in managerial terms and to have in mind notions of systematic organization, prediction and managerial control, reliable and effective techniques, and a concern with means of achieving particular goals" (p. 989).

In Shön's (1983) critique, technical rationality is based on the belief that university professors and scientists create knowledge through research and theory building and the practitioner's role is to learn the resulting knowledge and how to apply it. Others have broadened the definition of technical rationality to include any model or plan developed by outside experts that is to be implemented by practitioners in a mechanical fashion. Whether the term is used as Shön defined it or in a more general sense, practitioners are reduced to "instrumental problem solving," defined by Shön as "technical procedure to be measured by its effectiveness in achieving a pre-established objective" (p. 165). Applied to principal preparation, technical rationality means that professors of educational leadership present their students with leadership blueprints—based on research and theory in educational leadership or borrowed from other disciplines—to be applied in PK-12 schools.

Technical rationality makes a number of false assumptions that work against equity and social justice. One assumption is that theory building should be kept separate from practice. This assumption prevents the praxis necessary for social transformation (Freire, 1970). At the university level, separation of theory from

practice de-emphasizes school- and community-based learning and a variety of other learning experiences that incorporate a social-action approach to equity and social justice. At both the university and school level, this separation contradicts Freire's (1970) warning that there can be "no dichotomy by which this praxis could be divided into a prior stage of reflection and a subsequent stage of action. Action and reflection occur simultaneously" (p. 123). Movement toward equity and social justice in schools requires principals and teachers to engage in continuous reflection *and* action (Jean-Marie, 2008) and the principal prepared by a leadership program that separates theory and practice is ill-prepared to engage in or facilitate social change.

Technical Rationality also makes the assumption that external research and theoretical models can be implemented without regard to local context. However, understanding the context of a school, especially its cultural context, is essential to fostering equity and social justice (Thrupp & Lupton, 2006). When we add to this the reality that most improvement models support the dominant culture's view of school reform it becomes apparent why most externally designed interventions fail to improve schools serving students from minority cultures (Dillon, 2009; Kelly, 1999; Velencia & Villarreal, 2003).

A third false assumption of technical rationality is that even in complex organizations like schools change is a linear, cause and effect process; if the principal or school carries out program A then outcome B will result. This linear model ignores the cultural sensitivity, caring, dialogue, relationship building, and reflection needed to advance the causes of equity and social justice at the university and school level.

The false assumptions of technical rationality lead to a focus at the university level on technical skills. According to Angus (1996), leadership preparation focused on technical skills is more about cultural control than cultural responsiveness:

> Traditionally, educational administration and leadership have been presented in the literature largely in technical and managerial terms. The mainstream literature, historically, has been concerned with equipping educational administrators, especially school principals, with the necessary tools of the trade. These usually amount to techniques of management, planning, decision-making, motivation, delegation, communication, and, especially, leadership. From the traditional perspective, the definition of problems and solutions in educational administration is relatively narrow because they are generally conceptualized as management problems that can be solved by technical means. (p. 968)

Inherent moral problems lurk among technical rationality's false assumptions. Technical rationality often disguises the dominant culture's political agendas as purely technical processes (English, 2003). And with its emphasis on management skills, technical rationality tends to de-skill educators in cultural matters, turning principals into technocrats and teachers into technicians.

1.3.3 Maintenance of the Status Quo

Angus (1996) notes that the conventional approach explains social and cultural practices "in terms of their supposed contribution to a stable and coherent organization" (p. 976) and that the conventional view "takes the status quo as normal and natural rather than as the product of a political human action" (p. 980). Universities and PK-12 education alike have long histories of maintaining the organizational status quo. One reason for this is bureaucratization at both levels, particularly in PK-12 education.

As the size and number of public schools in the U.S. increased, so did the level of bureaucracy. Spring (1990) reports that by the end of the 19th century the bureaucratization of school districts included a top-down hierarchy, differentiated roles, graded schools, a uniform and graded program of study, and "an emphasis on planning, order, regularity, and punctuality" (p. 136), all elements still present in traditional districts. Spring concluded that bureaucratization "ensured that the dominant values of the school system would be Protestant and middle class" (p. 111).

The *organizational field* of school leadership policy, according to Roach, Smith, and Bouton (2011), includes such stakeholders as university preparation programs, state policy makers, private foundations, and professional organizations. Roach et al. conclude that the field is in a state of institutional isomorphism, defined as "the tendency for seemingly different institutions to adopt very similar policies and practices"

(p. 76). Isomorphism centered on state standards "locks schools, colleges, and departments of educational leadership into training 'best practices' rather than utilizing the academy to generate new knowledge in administrator preparation" (p.97) or to develop "new forms of practices to meet the needs of an increasingly complex set of school and student factors facing educational leaders in the United States" (p. 102). More specifically, principal preparation programs' symbiotic relationships with other institutions in their organizational field, combined with the other institutions' lack of commitment to equity and social justice, inhibit university preparation programs' development of leaders for equity and social justice.

The faculties of conventional principal preparation programs, of course, bear a fair share of responsibility for maintaining the status quo and failing to address matters of equity and social justice. Curriculum and teaching in conventional principal preparation programs tend to avoid content on equity and social justice and many professors of educational leadership resist efforts to integrate such content into coursework (Sensoy & Diangelo, 2009). Rusch (2004) concluded many professors of educational leadership do not know *how* to prepare educational leaders for work with diverse populations and thus fear and avoid discussions on equity and social justice in their classes. The avoidance of social justice issues by conservative professors is a source of tremendous frustration for students wishing to discuss those issues (Rusch, 2004) and faculty members committed to social justice (Sensoy & Diangelo, 2009).

Inadequate preparation in their leadership preparation program means that many principals are unable or unwilling to challenge the status quo in their schools:

A plethora of data suggest that some educational administrators accept, without question, disparate achievement for students from different class backgrounds, inequitable achievement in math and science for women and minorities, unequal access to competitive sports for women, burgeoning dropout and graduation rates for non-whites, and dramatically different postsecondary routes for some minority populations (Rusch, 2004, p.19).

Bureaucratization and avoidance contribute to the broader problem of "technical and traditional leadership that has helped build and maintain an inequitable status quo" (Theoharis, 2010, p. 334).

1.4 The Critical Approach

"Their critical pens never cease flowing because they have lost control of them, and instead of guiding them are guided by them" (Nietzsche, 1990, p.112)

Angus (1996) presents the critical approach as a preferable alternative to the conventional approach.

The socially critical orientation is towards the implicit social, educational, and political causes and effects of educational management, educational policy, and educational practice. This means that management is never seen as neutral and educational participants are seen as social and political actors rather than as occupants of organizational roles. (p. 990)

Referring to Angus's essay and the wider debate among competing camps, Waite (2002), analyzes the "paradigm wars in educational administration." Let us now examine an opponent of the conventional view in these paradigm wars.

Critical theory is rooted in Marxism and, in particular, the Institute for Social Research, established in Frankfurt Germany in 1923. The original purpose of the Institute was to explore why the revolution predicted by Marx had not occurred and to develop a more viable form of Marxism for the twentieth century. From its birth, critical theory sought to oppose capitalism, the domination of workers (through both external exploitation and internalized oppression), and positivism as a tool of capitalism (Agger, 1991).

The history of critical theory includes common threads and differing perspectives as well as conceptual development enabling critical theory to adapt to changing conditions. Horkheimer published the essay "Traditional and Critical Theory" in 1937, in which he explained that critical theory wished to change rather than merely explain the situation (Crotty, 1998). Habermas (1984, 1987) proposed in his "theory of communicative action" that authentic knowledge and change come from a combination of self-reflection

and interaction. Agger (1991) argued that critical communication theory has enabled "workable strategies of ideology-critique, community building, and social movement formation to be developed" (p. 110). Agger also concluded that the related "new social movements" theory of Habermas (1981) has connected critical theory to "movements deemed irrelevant by traditional Marxists, especially movements of people of color, women, anticolonialists, antinuclearists, environmentalists, etc." (Agger, 1991, p. 125).

The critical theorist best known to many educational practitioners in the U.S. is Paulo Freire, who has passionately and clearly written about actualizing critical theory in his education of the impoverished people of Brazil. Concepts discussed by Freire (1970)—pedagogy of the oppressed, *conscientizacão*, praxis, banking education, problem-posing education, and humanization, to name a few—have greatly influenced educators' conceptions of critical theory.

McGrew (2011) pointed out that there really are several critical theories (critical pedagogy, critical race theory, critical feminist theory, and so on) with different perspectives, "with critical theorists unified around a set of assumptions and values more than a unified theory" (p. 235). Kincheloe and McLaren (2008) describe ten concepts of critical theory, including:

1. Critical enlightenment about competing power interests (identifying the "winners" and "losers")
2. Critical emancipation enabling individuals and groups to control their own lives within just communities
3. The rejection of economic determinism
4. Critique of instrumental or technical rationality
5. The concept of immanence, or envisioning and moving toward concrete social reform
6. Power through hegemony
7. Power through ideology
8. Linguistic/discursive power
9. The centrality of interpretation and critical hermeneutics
10. The role of cultural pedagogy in critical theory (pp. 409-415)

Critical race theory in recent years has had a strong influence in many teacher and educational leadership preparation programs. Critical race theory began in the field of legal studies with the purpose of studying ways in which racism influenced the legal system. In the field of education, critical race theory "has sought to move the dialogue about race and racism from the realm of the experimental to the realm of the ideological" (Howard, 2010, p. 98). Howard (2010) described ways in which critical race theory examines racism in education, including focusing on the intersection of racism with other forms of oppression like classism and sexism, challenging the notion that educational research can be objective and neutral, using counterstory-telling as a research method, and partnering with other disciplines like women's and ethnic studies to study different forms of discrimination.

Critical race theorists are responsible for documenting many of the causes of the achievement gap discussed earlier in this paper. Villenas and Deyhle (1999) reviewed many of the major accomplishments of critical race ethnographers:

- The shift away from blaming students of color and their families for achievement gaps to blaming institutional practices
- The understanding that school curriculum is Eurocentric and designed to maintain the dominance of White culture
- Unmasking the false premises of deficit thinking, including perceptions that students and their families don't care about education and that students of color have less ability than white students. Also, documenting the damage done by deficit thinking, including lowered teacher expectations, assignment to special education or vocational tracks with low-level curriculum, lowered student motivation, failure, retention, and dropping out
- Revealing the unacceptable choice presented by many schools and teachers to students of color to either reject their families, communities, and cultures or fail
- Exposing how schools discourage the parents of many students of color from collaborating in their children's education with the school and teachers

- Documenting the power of an assets-based approach to education, including using aspects of the student's culture—funds of knowledge, norms, and social relationships—as assets for teaching and learning
- Describing how a community that develops economic and political power can use that power to express its cultural identity and secure its educational rights

Despite the important questions asked and research carried out by critical theorists, allowing critical theory to control the future of principal preparation would, I believe, be a mistake. Gordon (2010) warned against allowing *any* ideology to set the educational agenda: "Educational ideologies are a useful starting point for discussion; for *describing* the ideal positions of a debate, but they are not very helpful for *prescribing* solutions" (p. 289). Critical theory, unless held within limits, could be especially harmful.

> The critical impulse helps us to identify the injustices of a given political order. But critiques can also paralyze the imagination, suspend the development of an alternative political vision, and engender despair. If leftist critique becomes hyper-critical, smelling power and injustice everywhere, it can lead to a politics of reaction where everything the Left stands for is posited as good while everything about the Right is evil. (Sokoloff, 2008, par. 1)

The critical theorist Kenneth Gergen provided one of the most powerful critiques of critical theory. Early in Gergen's (1994a) essay, "The Limits of Pure Critique," he compared critical theory to a war machine:

> We now stand with a mammoth arsenal of critical weaponry at our disposal. The power of such technology is unmatched by anything within the scholarly traditions of longstanding. There is virtually no hypothesis, body of evidence, ideological stance, literary cannon, value commitment or logical edifice that cannot be dismantled, demolished or derived with the implements at hand. Only rank prejudice, force of habit, or the anguished retaliation of deflated egos can muster a defense against the intellectual explosives within our grasp. Everywhere now in the academic world the capitalist WASP exploiters, male chauvinist pigs, cultural imperialists, warmongers, bigots, wimp liberals, and scientific dogmatists are on the run . . . .The revolution is on, heads are rolling everywhere, there is no limit to the potential destruction. (pp. 59-60)

When I first read Gergen's war machine metaphor, I thought it was humorous but a bit over the top. But then I began to review the vocabulary of critical theory. Some of the key terms used by critical theorists— emancipate, empower, enable, transform, and so on—are quite positive. Much of the language of critical theory, however, is in fact militant. Setting aside the language one would expect critical theorists to use when describing what those in power do to groups and individuals not in power (hegemonizing, marginalizing, objectifying, subjugating, victimizing, oppressing etc.), the language that critical theorists use *to describe their own initiatives and how they deal with their opponents* is quite militant. Table 1 lists examples of militant terms used in critical theory.

Table 1

Examples of Militant Terms in Critical Theory

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Appropriate	Efface
Contain	Interrupt
Contested Territory	Interrogate
Decenter	Neutralize
Delegitimize	Oppositional
Denaturalize	Power Base
Deploy	Rupture
Displacement	Sublate
Disrupt	Subvert

Gergen (1994a) identified five serious problems with critical theory, all of which can be readily applied to principal preparation programs.

- **The containment of conversation:** Critical theory establishes a binary in which "*this is opposed to that*" (p. 60). The critic establishes the terms of the binary, and the boundaries of the conversation are fixed, pushing other potential discussions to the periphery. "As the interchange is polarized around a single continuum, there is a ferocious flattening of the world and a silencing of other voices" (p. 61).
- **Critique as rhetorical incitement:** Critique tends to cause rhetorical conflict between critical theorists and those they target; "criticism transforms the target's attempts at self-expression to mere foolishness, knavery, or idiocy" (p. 63). The criticism leads to the target's defensiveness and counter-critique, the cycle of rhetorical conflict is set in motion, relationships are destroyed, and the possibility of meaningful dialogue disappears.
- **The atomization of community:** Critique within a community creates or spotlights a category and discredits all members of the community within that category. "Not only are their social identities in peril, but so too are the relationships in which they are embedded" (p. 65). The targeted members of the community "close ranks, re-affirm their relationships, articulate the value of their positions and locate myriad ways in which their attackers are unjust and misinformed" (pp. 65-66).
- **Critique and the totalizing impulse:** The critique, if successful, will increase the voice of those who the critics support. However, "...the fully successful critique will also stifle those voices placed under attack. They are thrust to the margins for their hegemonic tendencies. Should the critic prove successful, the accomplishment is not thus the broadening of the discursive domain. It is the replacement of one form of totalization with its opposite number. It is an inversion of the binary, with results that are no less stifling." (p. 68)
- **The problematics of principle:** Critical theory deeply distrusts mainstream belief systems, institutions, and bodies of knowledge. It uses the weapons of critique to identify weaknesses in its target and to rob those targets of their validity and meaning. Gergen (1994b) believes that this approach can lead to "broad cultural enfeeblement" (p. 148), and that critical theory eventually undermines *itself*: "For while it has become enormously effective in undermining the opposition, such critique simultaneously casts aspersions on its own production. Not only the grounds of its arguments, but all forms of counter-assertion stand subject to the same form of self-immolation. And in opening themselves to such analysis, they also lose both validity and possible meaning." (Gergen, 1994a, p. 69)

Gergen (1994b) thus considered critical theory, which rails against deficit thinking, a deficit model in its own right. He summarized the problem succinctly: "Furnish the population with the hammers of deficit, and the world is full of nails" (p. 158).

Ludema, Cooperrider, and Barrett (2001) agreed with Gergen's assessment. They warned that when organizations become centers of critical inquiry they "learn how to be deficient and problematic" (p. 191). Pearl (1997) lamented the reality that deficit thinking cuts across the conventional and the critical:

> Conservative support for deficit thinking is to be expected. What adds to the difficulty is that liberal and radical thinkers and policy makers have created their own manifestations of deficit thinking. In attempting to eliminate deficit thinking we literally are walking into an intellectual battlefield confronting cannons to the left and cannons to the right. (pp. 211-212)

Another problem with critical theory is what Freire (1970) called "circles of certainty," a concept normally associated with the conventional but that can be applied to critical theory as well. The conventionalist within a circle of certainty "attempts to domesticate the present so that (he hopes) the future will reproduce the present" (pp. 22-23). The critical theorist within a circle of certainty "considers the future pre-established—a kind of inevitable fate, fortune or destiny" (p. 23). The critical theorist entrapped in a circle of certainty knows exactly what a socially just world would look like and exactly what everyone needs to do to make that world a reality. Santoro (2009) posited,

> This form of knowing encloses social justice pedagogy, its students, and its teachers in circles of certainty that limit possibilities, in terms of both what actions may be taken in order to work toward a more just future and what a more just future would entail. (p. 241)

Ken McGrew (2011), himself a critical theorist, feared that by ignoring research or practical experience that disagrees with any if its assumptions critical theory has fallen into its own circle of certainty.

> For theory separated from praxis, that is, theory that is closed to consideration of both its strengths and weaknesses in light of practice (and evidence), will inevitably fail to accurately portray reality and the means by which it can be transformed. (p. 257)

Critiques like those of Gergen, McGrew, Pearl, and Santoro, may help to explain English's (2003) observation that "critical theory has not produced any expanded vision for the nature of leadership" (p. 51).

What does the above critique of critical theory mean in regard to the growing influence of critical theory in principal preparation programs? One definite possibility is a faculty split between critical theorists and faculty members with different belief systems, resulting in a balkanized culture that would adversely affect both faculty and students. Beyond the problem of balkanization of a fairly evenly split faculty, several leadership programs across the nation now have faculties in which critical theorists are predominant. There is no significant body of research that has studied the effects of predominantly critical faculties on educational leadership preparation programs. However, based on the broader critiques of critical theory in academia shared above I raise a number of concerns here. These concerns are consistent with my conversations with faculty and students from programs dominated by critical theory, and center on "critical" programs becoming negative mirror images of the conventional programs that critical theorists complain about (see Figure 1). The concerns include:

- Conflict between the dominant group of critical theorists and other faculty members, and the eventual marginalization of other faculty members
- Reluctance of the dominant group to hire any new faculty members who are not critical theorists
- If the program has a sufficient number of applicants, an effort by the dominant group to restrict admission to those applicants who have a strong potential for adopting a critical perspective during their graduate studies
- Presentation of all content through a critical lens
- Verbal classroom conflict between professors and students who embrace critical theory and students who do not, with the critical side usually "winning"

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- Privileging of students who embrace (or at least seem to embrace) critical theory and the marginalization and eventual silencing of those who do not
- Faculty expectations that student theses or other research projects in which persons from minority cultures are subjects will be carried out from a theoretical perspective of critical theory, that a major finding will be the presence of unjust power relations, and that any study that does not center on such power relations and the oppression that comes with them is seriously flawed. Also, an insistence by faculty that student researchers who do not find unjust power relationships "dig deeper" to find such relationships (here the concern is not so much about the "digging deeper" as the predestined findings).

Figure 1. Positive and Negative Mirror Image

In the classroom, critical theorists tend to use what Simons (1994) called promotive strategies. Simons placed promotive strategies on a continuum from most to least biased: "all out persuasion," "authority buttressed by persuasion," "restricted dialogue," and "guided discussion" (pp. 136-140). Simon showed how even in guided discussion there is a fair amount of manipulation by the professor. An example of manipulation is "cued elicitation," with the "correct" response to a professor's question prompted by the wording of the question. Another technique is to ask students supportive of the professor's position to have the last word in a discussion. Simon notes that, even in guided discussion, the opinions of students who disagree with the professor are anything but valued:

> A recurrent pattern in essays urging guided discussion is the pathologization of disagreement: the assumption that it is a reflection of denial, withdrawal, insecurity, unconscious hostility or some other defense against what the pedagogue takes to be an obvious truth….the objecting student is double-bound: encouraged to talk openly, but then made an object of sympathy or derision. (p. 140)

McGrew (2011) urged critical theory in education to free itself from its "prison of certainty" by returning to Freire's idea of praxis:

> If critical theory is to be of use in opposing exploitation and poverty (dare I say oppression) then it must constantly test its assumptions and arguments in light of practice and evidence…otherwise, a field built with ambitions for social justice may be reduced to little more than establishing career lines in niches in the academy, fancy words, and preaching to the choir. (p. 257)

Despite its militancy, tendency to restrict communication and increase conflict, circles of certainty, and marginalization of other perspectives, critical theory has made significant contributions to the field of educational leadership and will continue to do so. Because of its negative characteristics, however, critical theory should not be the primary path toward equity and social justice in education or educational leadership.

Because neither the conventional nor the critical approach *by itself* is a viable option, we need a "third way" toward preparing principals for equity and social justice leadership.

Continued in Part 2

Chapter 2

Beyond Convention, Beyond Critique: Toward a Third Way of Preparing Educational Leaders to Promote Equity and Social Justice (Part 2)[1]

NCPEA Publications

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2.1 A Proposal for a Third Way

"We are the other, and the other is us" (Banks, 2000, p.41)

The third way I propose here is an approach that does not represent any particular ideological camp but rather attempts to integrate ideas from various perspectives into a coherent model for preparing educational leaders for equity and social justice. There is support in the literature for each of its seven components,

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[1]This content is available online at <http://cnx.org/content/m43705/1.4/>.

[2]http://www.ncpeapublications.org/latest-issue-ijelp.html

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and there is some preliminary evidence that the model as a whole has potential for fostering equity and social justice. In one study by Madhlangobe and Gordon (in press) a school administrator who was observed using all of the model's components was successful at increasing equity and improving students' personal, social, and academic development. In another study (Gordon & Ronder, 2009), students at the end of a principal preparation program that includes all seven components of the model displayed higher levels of cultural sensitivity than either new students in the program or practitioners who graduated from other programs. The research mentioned here, however, consists of small-scale studies within particular contexts and represents only the first, tentative steps toward determining the model's worth. The model also is based on conversations over a number of years with practitioners, including many of my graduate students, who work every day for equity and social justice in PK-12 schools (if Lewin was correct that there is nothing so practical as a good theory, perhaps we should couple that belief to the idea that there is no theory so practical as one based on practice). My purpose in presenting the model is to generate discussion on its potential that may lead faculties in some leadership programs to develop their own versions of the model, no doubt incrementally, and to explore whether integrating the model into principal preparation makes a difference in the learning of aspiring principals.

Although the model can be applied to either a Master's or doctoral program in educational leadership, my discussion of the model here will focus on applying it to principal preparation. Preparation programs following the model would integrate its seven components throughout the curriculum rather than addressing them by adding one or two "diversity courses." A faculty can incorporate most or all of the components into any course in a principal preparation program, although the faculty would need to modify the program so the components were addressed on a recurring basis throughout the curriculum. Depending on the sequence of courses and nature of a particular course, a program could emphasize particular components of the model in some courses more than in others, but in the broader sense the model and its various components would need to permeate the entire program.

A final point to be made before discussing the model's specific components is that principal preparation programs, whether using the model proposed here or another, need to take a developmental approach to preparing leaders for equity and social justice. First, it is wrong to place applicants for principal preparation programs into one of two categories, culturally competent or incompetent, and reject all who are deemed incompetent. Adults, including principal preparation program applicants, all are located somewhere on a continuum of cultural competence (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2003; National Center for Cultural Competence, 2004). Indeed, since there are many different types of cultures, everyone occupies different positions on many different continuums of cultural competence. It is simplistic to believe that we can predict from the typical application process who the "future oppressors" and "future emancipators" are, and deny admission to those labeled as the former.

Second, students already enrolled in principal preparation programs, of course, also are at different levels of cultural competence. This means that professors using the model presented in this paper need to adapt the model to the student's developmental level.

> When it comes to teaching about issues of equity and diversity, the one-size-fits-all approach can no longer be the guiding principle for teaching in principal preparation programs. As faculty we must account for developmental differences to work with students at their developmental levels. (Hernandez & Marshall, 2009, p. 319)

The seven components of the proposed model, illustrated in Figure 2, include awareness, care, critique, expertise, relationship, community, and accountability, with relationship at the model's center.
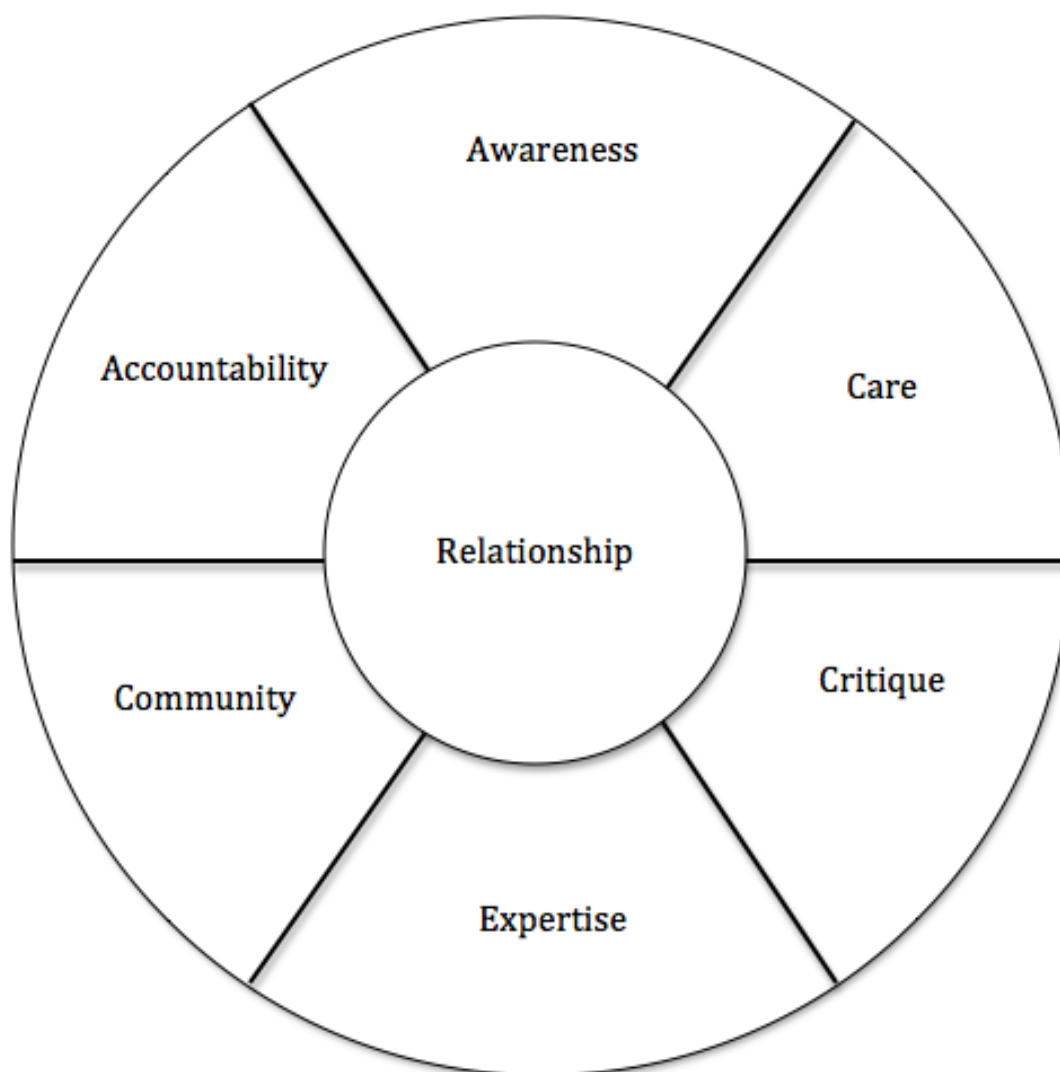
Figure 2. Equity and Social Justice in Principal Preparation

2.1.1 Awareness

Students in principal preparation programs need to develop an understanding of culture as a general concept, their own culture, and how their cultural background influences their interactions with other cultures. Pre-service principals also should develop an understanding that the larger culture has a tremendous effect on schools and that, consciously or unconsciously, schools tend to reflect the White, middle class culture and to transmit the dominant culture to all students.

The vast majority of students preparing to be principals know about achievement gaps among cultural groups; most of them are teachers and witness those gaps on at least some level. However, students need to better understand the *extent* of the gaps, *reasons* for the gaps, and the devastating *effects* on diverse groups. Students need to become aware of how a Eurocentric curriculum, deficit thinking, misunderstanding of different cultural norms, misinterpretation of student behaviors, different communication styles, and misdiagnoses of learning disabilities all contribute to achievement gaps. Additionally, students in principal preparation programs need to learn just how extensive gender inequity and discrimination against LGBT students are, and the terrible harm those types of inequity cause.

Many of the pedagogical strategies described by Brown (2004) are appropriate for the awareness stage,

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including cultural autobiographies, life history interviews, reflective analysis journals, and cross-cultural interviews. Students can review a variety of achievement and other types of data on different cultural groups, including published national, state, and local data as well as data students gather directly from their local communities and schools. Other possible learning activities include "study of a stranger," a day of shadowing and conversing with a person from a culture different from one's own; and teams of students doing cultural histories of diverse communities, including review of historical documents, site visits, and interviews of older community members from different cultures. Experiential activities at the awareness stage should be complimented with appropriate readings, dialogue among professors and students, and ongoing assistance and feedback.

2.1.2 Care

The concept of care in education is grounded in the feminist tradition (Noddings, 1984, 2001, 2005). "Caring is not just a warm, fuzzy feeling that makes people kind and likable. Caring implies a continuous search for competence. When we care, we want to do the very best for the objects of our care" (Noddings, 1995, p. 676). Care is a critical concept in the work for equity and social justice because merely being aware of inequity and its negative effects does not necessarily mean that one cares enough about the victims to join with them in the struggle for transformation. The challenge to principal preparation is not only to increase future principals' care for various cultural groups but also to increase pre-service principals' capacity to help others to care.

A good place to learn about care is the research on culturally responsive principals. Madhlangobe (2009), for example, carried out a long-term case study of Faith, an assistant principal in a culturally diverse school who was judged by an expert panel, teachers, students, and parents to be highly culturally responsive. Madhlangobe found that caring was a theme running through Faith's leadership. First and foremost, Faith demonstrated care in her passion for children. Faith tried to understand each student as an individual, *listening* to them and paying attention to their feelings and needs. Faith both respected and comforted students when they came to her with difficulties. Faith also showed her teachers that she cared for them, as a strategy to encourage the teachers to care for students. Finally, Faith showed parents that she cared for their students by making conversations with parents a top priority and regularly sharing with them information on their children. Faith's ultimate goal in caring for teachers, parents, and students was to "see all students develop the same caring and responsible behaviors towards each other" (p. 193).

Noddings (2005) believes an act of caring is not complete unless the cared-for reciprocates with "reception, recognition, and response" (p. 16). Others take a broader view of caring. For example, Desmond Tutu (2011) described the traditional African concept of *Ubuntu*:

> Those who had *Ubuntu* were compassionate and gentle, they used their strength on behalf of the weak, and they did not take advantage of others—in short, they *cared*, treating others as what they were: human beings. If you lacked *Ubuntu*, in a sense you lacked an indispensable ingredient of being human. (p. 23)

Martin Luther King Jr. (1992) spoke of three Greek words for love, *eros* (romantic love), *philia* (love between friends), and *Agape*, which is "understanding, redemptive good will for men" (p. 31). King's definition of Agape is very close to Tutu's explanation of *Ubuntu*. Perhaps educators seeking equity and social justice in schools should focus their efforts around the types of care espoused and demonstrated by leaders like Tutu and King.

To begin to increase care for marginalized groups, readings and videos that humanize students from different cultures and describe caring teachers are a good start. For example, Delpit's (2006) *Other People's Children*, Ladson-Billings' (2009) *The Dreamkeepers*, and Valenzuela's (1999) *Subtractive Schooling* are powerful books that evoke respect and care for children of color and those who care for them.

Another positive strategy for promoting care is the use of testimonials in educational leadership classes. Testimonials are stories told by students or parents about how caring teachers or principals have positively affected their lives. These stories can inspire pre-service principals to model and encourage the same type of care when they become campus administrators (Madhlangobe, 2009).

If caring is reciprocal, than it seems that pre-service principals need to participate in that reciprocal process by interacting with marginalized children they teach or provide other professional service but who they have never really gotten to know well. Future principals can begin ongoing dialogue with those students about their lives. "What are their backgrounds? What are their perceptions and interests? What supports do they have at home?" (Gleason, 2010, p. 48). Pre-service principals can then process these clinical experiences through reflective writing and class discussions.

2.1.3 Critique

Critical theorists rightly condemn deficit thinking about students, families, and communities but tend to be far less protective of teachers and principals. However, the fact is that teachers and principals walk into the same system as the clients they serve, ill-prepared by their teacher and principal preparation programs to deal with that system. Critique of educational leadership and teaching, and even individual leaders and teachers, is necessary, but should be done in the context of leaders and teachers working within a controlling society, educational system, and local environment. Moreover, both school and educator critique should be primarily *self-critique*.

Self-critique can take the form of what Murtadha-Watts and Stoughton (2004) called "culturally focused dialogue" (p. 4). Nieto (2003) noted that culturally focused dialogue can center on socio-cultural differences or school polices and practices. Nieto describes socio-cultural differences as "societal ideologies, government policies and mandates, and school financing" (p. 8). Under the category of school policies and practices Nieto includes "curriculum, pedagogy, tracking, testing, discipline and hiring" (p. 8). Johnson (2003) adds to the list of school issues "scheduling practices, enrollment patterns, participation rates in school activities and special services..." (p. 21). Pre-service principals can practice facilitating culturally focused dialogue, first with other graduate students, and then as a clinical experience with a school faculty.

Students in principal preparation classes who are going to engage in critique of sociopolitical and school practices can seek a small group of volunteers from a specific school (usually the school they work in) to form a cultural dialogue group. Pre-service principals can help each other prepare questions to ask in dialogue sessions. Murtadha-Watts and Stoughton (2004), for example, suggest questions that would support culturally based dialogue on a specific school curriculum:

- How does the content of the curriculum (or specific lessons) serve certain established interests and points of view while marginalizing or excluding others? Whose culture is valued?
- How can the curriculum be constructed and connected to the lived experiences of children and families from different cultural backgrounds? What fit exists?
- How can instruction include inquiry by teachers and students that increases understanding?
- What social responsibility and social action will the education lead to? (p. 4)

After leading a dialogue session, students can do written reflections on the experience and discuss the results of the dialogue session in class.

Pre-service principals can engage in a whole range of school-based data gathering and analysis to critique school policies and practices relative to equity and social justice. Existing or student-designed tools can be used to gather data. Bustamante and Nelson, for example, have developed an observation checklist that assesses schoolwide cultural competence across seven domains (Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). A rubric designed by Kose (2007) assesses the level of socially just teaching in the areas of achievement rigor, care, and inclusion. My own students have created and used observation tools, surveys, and interview protocols to gather equity data at the classroom, school, and school-community levels. My students also have analyzed school documents and artifacts during equity assessments of (a) curriculum, (b) resource distribution, (c) teacher professional development, (d) student referral, placement, and grouping, and (e) student achievement. Some of the most transformational learning I have observed has occurred when students have shared and discussed equity data they have gathered from their own schools and districts.

Educators need individual critique if they are going to experience the cognitive dissonance that motivates personal change (Festinger, 1957). Critique of the individual educator should be primarily self-critique

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facilitated by colleagues. Pre-service principals should learn not only how to practice self-critique but also how to foster others' self-critique. Brown's (2004) "educational plunge" is an excellent vehicle for self-critique. Students visit an educational setting culturally different from any they have experienced, the selection of setting based in part on their self-assessed level of cultural development. The plunge "pushes students' comfort zone" (p. 101) and provides for "face-to-face interaction with people from the focal group" (pp. 101-102). Students write a reflection paper on the experience, including a discussion of biases uncovered and challenged, emotions the plunge elicited, and what the experience and reflection on it taught them about equity and social justice.

Just as students can gather data to critique schools, so they can gather data to critique themselves. Pre-service principals who work in schools can provide surveys to students or other educators and ask them for anonymous feedback on the level of cultural responsiveness the aspiring principals display. Pre-service principals also can create equity observation tools and ask other educators to use the tools to gather data on the future principals as they teach classes or lead meetings. Self-reflection goes hand-in- hand with self-critique. Structured reflection, reflective journaling, and self-designed growth plans all can promote self-critique (Furman, 2012). Self-reflection will not only help students critique themselves but will also help them to develop skills to assist teachers to carry out self-critique.

2.1.4 Expertise

School leaders must not only display cultural expertise and help other individuals develop cultural expertise; they must also work with others to develop *culturally responsive schools*. The National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC) (1994) states that culturally responsive organizations "have the capacity to (1) value diversity, (2) conduct self-assessment, (3) manage the dynamics of difference, (4) acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge, and (5) adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of communities they serve" (p. 1).

Principals with cultural expertise work to restructure schools, professionalize teachers and staff, collaborate with the community, and improve learning for marginalized students (Theoharis, 2010). A particularly important aspect of cultural expertise is an understanding of and capacity to support culturally responsive pedagogy, defined by Gay (2000) as affirming and using "the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethically diverse students to make learning more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 29).

How does a principal preparation program help its students to develop cultural expertise? First, each of the areas of study we've already discussed: awareness, caring, and critique, are moving the student toward expertise. Continuing to read and discuss ethnographic studies on culturally responsive principals and teachers is important here, but in time the preparation program can go father and ask students to *perform* small-scale ethnographic studies of culturally responsive principals and teachers as well as empowered communities. Students can discuss how they could use particular readings and videos when helping teachers to develop culturally responsive pedagogy. Aspiring principals can engage in simulations and role-plays in which they practice techniques for helping teachers to develop more responsive pedagogy (Furman, 2012).

Dialogues with panels of experts on different cultures (and their intersections) would be most helpful to students developing strategies for responding to different cultural groups. Field visits to schools known to be culturally responsive also would benefit aspiring principals. Pre-service principals eventually can engage in Brown's (2004) activist action plans at the school, community, and state level in order to develop skills for participating in appropriate activism as principals.

The development of expertise in fostering equity through professional development often means integrating traditional skills taught in principal preparation programs with value-added skills for equity and social justice. For example, Gleason (2010) adds to the basics of professional development (time, content, appropriate processes, supportive contexts) three additional elements for social justice: a focus on the marginalized, using data to understand how diverse groups learn, and measuring the impact of professional learning on the underserved. Value-added content should be integrated across the principal preparation program. To general research on school improvement must be added research on improvement of schools serving underrepresented groups; to the study of curriculum development must be added examination of the Eurocentric curriculum and the need for a multicultural curriculum; to clinical supervision skills must be added skills for gathering

observation data and providing feedback on teachers' efforts to develop culturally responsive pedagogy, and so on.

2.1.5 Relationship

I place relationship in the center of Figure 2 because I consider relationship the most important part of the model both in pre-service principals' learning about and in-service principals' work for equity and social justice (Theoharis, 2007). For an example of building relationships for equity and social justice, let us return to Faith, the culturally responsive leader in Madhlangobe's (2009) study. Relationship building was Faith's *primary* vehicle for culturally responsive leadership. Faith's other leadership strategies flowed from her relationship building. Although Faith's personal relationships solved many problems and prevented many others, the really transformational nature of her work was the fostering of others' relationships: relationships among teachers, between teachers and students, between teachers and parents, among students, and so on.

Faith used a variety of strategies to develop relationships, including (a) empathizing with others, (b) reducing anxiety among teachers and students, (c) respecting others, (d) inspiring responsibility and commitment in others, (e) using humor, (f) being approachable, (g) organizing student testimonies on the power of relationship, (h) demonstrating compassion, and (i) being diplomatic. Running through each of Faith's strategies was the importance of dialogue in relationship building. Faith continuously engaged in dialogue with students, teachers, parents, and community members, and continuously encouraged dialogue among others.

It makes sense to share strategies like Faith's with pre-service principals, and to engage students in the type of dialogue that will increase the chances of those strategies being successful in PK-12 schools. However, we need to be careful about what we mean by dialogue for equity and social justice. Some forms of "critical dialogue" can be divisive, pitting students against each other, causing some students to be silenced, and leading to animosity between groups and individuals. It is important, then, for principals to understand what authentic dialogue is all about.

The theoretical physicist David Bohm is widely credited with first promoting the type of dialogue described here. Bohm (1985) wrote that in authentic dialogue "people are no longer primarily in opposition, nor can they be said to be interacting, rather they are participating in this pool of common meaning which is capable of constant development and change" (p. 175). Everyone engaged in dialogue is equal; it may have a facilitator but it has no leader. Dialogue is not interested in debate, negotiation, or changing anyone's beliefs or behaviors, although beliefs and behaviors often change as a result of dialogue. Dialogue is open to any topic, exploratory, reflective, and concerned with collective learning and shared meaning. As a group becomes more experienced with dialogue, "increasing trust between members of the group—and in the process itself —leads to the expression of the sorts of thoughts and feelings that are usually kept hidden" (Bohm, Factor, & Garett, 1991, par. 21).

Capacities for participating in dialogue, according to Issacs (1999), include listening, respecting (legitimizing others and honoring their boundaries), suspending opinions, and speaking one's voice. A study by Ryan (1999) identified techniques educational leaders use to promote dialogue:

- **Connecting:** Being visible and accessible in the school as well as being willing to visit families in their homes and meet community members in public places
- **Listening:** Being willing to listen and demonstrating listening skills
- **Learning:** Leaders reported "*learning about*, and *learning from* the diverse groups that comprise the school community" (p. 15)
- **Educating Others:** Sharing information with and modeling dialogue for other members of the school community

Principal preparation programs need to provide opportunities throughout the program for students to engage in dialogue and relationship building.

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2.1.6 Community

Sergiovanni's (1999) suggestion that schools be viewed as communities rather than organizations is generally compatible with movement toward equity and social justice. "In contrast to organizations, relationships in communities are based on shared identity, beliefs, values, and goals. Members of the community are mutually committed to each other and the community" (Glickman, et al., 2010, p. 462; Hord and Sommers, 2008). Of course, not all communities are good communities: "A community can be an insular, myopic, or prejudiced" (Glickman, et al, 2010, p. 462). To adapt the concept of community to the preparation of principals four issues must be addressed: the issues of (a) unity and diversity, (b) individual or collective leadership, (c) the relationship of the school community with the larger community, and (d) how a community of discourse among aspiring principals should be managed.

Regarding the issue of unity and diversity, a graduate student who remarks to a critical theorist that persons from different cultures have more commonalities than differences is likely to be summarily diagnosed as being at a lower level on the cultural competence continuum. Yet some of the great leaders for equity and social justice outside and inside of education would agree with the student. A few examples follow:

- "Fundamentally we all have the same needs and aspirations" – Nelson Mandela (2003, p. 294)
- "The law of being is to live in solidarity, friendship, helpfulness, unselfishness, interdependence, and complementarity, as sisters and brothers in one family, the human family" – Desmond Tutu (2011, p. 50)
- "Our destinies are tied together. There is no separate black path to power and fulfillment that does not have to intersect with white roots. Somewhere along the way the two must join together, black and white together, we shall overcome, and I still believe it." – Martin Luther King, Jr. (1996, p. 23).
- "We all belong to one species—humankind. There is only one ongoing conversation—the human conversation, consisting of the work, play, parenting, conversing, and imagining in which we all engage and of the beliefs, hopes, and aspirations that we hold." – John Goodlad (2003-2004, p. 20)

The motto "E Pluribus Unum" is criticized by many critical theorists, yet famous proponents of equity outside and inside of education express the need for diversity *within* unity. Martin Luther King, Jr. constantly warned civil rights workers that the ultimate goal of the civil rights movement was "not to defeat the white community" but rather "reconciliation and the creation of a beloved community" (King, 1992, pp. 30-31). And James Banks (2000) argues, "A major problem facing the nation-state is how to recognize and legitimize differences and yet construct an overarching national identity that incorporates the voices, experiences, and hopes of the diverse groups that compose it" (p. 28).

Does the concept of E Pluribus Unum have any place in programs preparing leaders for equity and social justice? Patrick (1997) sheds some light on this issue in his discussion of three different models of E Pluribus Unum: (a) monolithic integration, (b) pluralistic preservation, and (c) pluralistic integration. *Monolithic integration* would assimilate all cultures "through radical subordination or even elimination of ethnic and cultural pluralism" (p. 4). Monolithic integration is, in short, the conventional melting pot model.

Pluralistic preservation places its emphasis on preserving cultural identity and cultural determinism, and "subordination of an overarching American identity and culture to the primacy of multicultural identities" (p. 14). Pluralistic preservation is a model that many critical theorists embrace.

Patrick's third model of E Pluribus Unum, *pluralistic integration*, originally developed by John Higham (1963), "assumes both the fundamental compatibilities and continuing tensions of civic and national unity with social and cultural diversity" (Patrick, 1997, p. 17). Pluralistic integration assumes a middle ground between the other two models, balancing majority rule with the rights of minority groups, individual freedom with social responsibility, and common values with cultural integrity (Patrick, 1997).

What role should the three models of E Pluribus Unum play in principal preparation programs? My belief is that, rather than either ignoring the concept of E Pluribus Unum all together or focusing on one of the three models (the "correct" one), students should be exposed to and discuss the merits and drawbacks of all three models. Students should have opportunities to generate their own theories on the proper relationship of unity and diversity, and discuss how they will work with members of a school community to explore that relationship.

A second issue concerning community is whether we should prepare principals to be "heroic individuals" or "communal leaders." Bogotch (2002) describes the former:

> Heroic individuals often have a single-mindedness to pursue their own vision tenaciously and apart from others who may not share their particular vision. Such visions, or notions of social justice, begin and end as a discrete, yet coherent belief system that separates nonbelievers from true believers. (p. 148)

Communal leadership, in contrast to heroic leadership, "shifts the locus of moral agency to the community as a whole" (Furman, 2004, p. 222). Communal leadership invites all members of the school community to engage in dialogue on their diverse views and construct a vision of social justice appropriate to the local context. Moreover, in communal leadership the meaning of social justice is under continuous construction in order to address a continuously changing context (Bogotch, 2002; Furman, 2004).

Preparing communal leaders is more consistent with the "third way" proposed in this article than preparing heroic individuals. Communal leadership skills proposed by Furman (2004) include:

- Listening with respect;
- Striving for knowing and understanding others;
- Communicating effectively;
- Working in teams;
- Engaging in ongoing dialogue; and
- Creating forums that allow all voices to be heard. (p. 222)

Of course, to become communal leaders pre-service principals need to learn not only the skills of communal leadership but also how to teach those skills to members of a school community (Furman, 2004). It also seems appropriate for pre-service principals, working collaboratively, to construct their own communal visions of social justice, but such construction should wait until students have developed a fairly high level of cultural expertise.

Another strategy that can be used to prepare principals as communal leaders is appreciative inquiry, presented by Ludema, Cooperrider, and Barrett (2001) as an alternative to critical theory. Appreciative inquiry begins with a "discovery phase" in which members of an organization (or school community) decide (a) what they value most about their organization, their work, and their colleagues and (b) what opportunities are available for making the organization even better. After the discovery phase, participants collaborate in a "dream phase" (envisioning a better future), a "design phase" (planning for a better future), and a "destiny phase" (constructing the better future). Although appreciative inquiry projects in schools are long-term endeavors, pre-service principals can engage in scaled-down projects with small groups of teachers.

Critical theory might question activities like constructing communal visions of social justice or leading appreciative inquiry. Where is the unmasking of unequal power relationships, the critique of hegemony, and so forth? Perhaps the words of Mahatma Gandhi, one of the great crusaders for social justice in world history, will lesson the critic's concerns: "Higher education stands for unity, for catholicity, for toleration, and wide outlook. The culture a university imparts should make you find the points of contact, and avoid those of conflict" (cited in Fischer, 1963, p.38).

A third issue in the study of community is concerned with how pre-service principals should be prepared to connect the school community to the larger community that the school serves. Under the broad category of school-community partnership there are at least three alternative types of leadership a pre-service principal should learn about: (a) leading a school that offers school-based or school-linked community services, (b) leading a school in its participation in community development, and (c) leading a school that uses the community as a learning environment (Glickman, et al., 2010).

Knowledge about various models of school-community partnership is important but, like so many aspects of leadership for equity and social justice, field-based experiences should compliment theory. Students can visit or do volunteer work in "full-service schools" and reflect on their experiences; graduate classes can participate in community development projects; and pre-service principals can participate in appropriate activism to address cultural, social, economic, and political problems affecting marginalized communities.

CHAPTER 2. BEYOND CONVENTION, BEYOND CRITIQUE: TOWARD A
THIRD WAY OF PREPARING EDUCATIONAL LEADERS TO PROMOTE
EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (PART 2)

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A final issue of community is concerned not so much with aspiring principals' future communal and community leadership but with communities of discourse within the principal preparation program. Given the volatile issues and conflicting views bound to emerge from discussions of equity and social justice, how should the professor manage discourse? To what extent should the professor guide discussion to predetermined conclusions that support equity and social justice? Sen (2004) proposes two guidelines regarding the consideration of claims (or denials) concerning human rights that can be applied to communities of discourse on equity and social justice: assertions should be subject to (a) the free flow of accurate information and (b) critical examination and open discussion. Sen's (2004) advice on disagreements among proponents of human rights also can be applied to discussions about equity and social justice: variations in beliefs of those fundamentally committed to equity and social justice about how to describe or enact it should not be disconcerting to professors or students. None of us, not even the most committed, knows the perfect path to equity and social justice, or even exactly what they would look like if fully attained. It is Sen's information, critique, and discussion that will best enlighten our journey toward the goal.

2.1.7 Accountability

Schools should be accountable for equity and social justice, but such accountability should be educative rather than punitive, and professional rather than bureaucratic, with the primary emphasis on self-accountability. Principals and teachers on study teams formed to assess the school's progress in different areas of equity and social justice can use many of the same types of data gathering and analysis techniques as well as the culturally focused dialogue described in the earlier discussion on critique.

In self-accountability, schools gather data on how typically marginalized groups are being treated and educated as well as factors that are contributing to any documented inequity. Documenting inequity, however, is not enough; plans for addressing the inequity need to be designed, implemented, and measured for their effectiveness. One way of documenting self-accountability is to develop an equity portfolio with a structure similar to the school portfolio advocated by Bernhardt (1994). An annual equity portfolio could include separate sections documenting each of the following:

1. Data gathering and analysis methods used to assess the level of equity in the school for multiple cultural groups, as well as the results of the assessment

2. Action plans for addressing inequities documented in the equity assessment, including plans for developing partnerships, professional development, changes in school policies and structures, improvements in classroom practice, and so on, as well as descriptions of data that will be gathered to assess the effectiveness of improvement activities

3. Implementation of action plans, including specific programs and activities, ongoing dialogue about improvement efforts, and modifications to the action plan in response to feedback or changing conditions

4. Data gathering and analysis to determine the effects of improvement efforts by the end of the school year, and recommendations for continuing, revising or initiating new improvement actions the following school year

External accountability for equity and social justice can be linked with the school equity portfolio discussed above. One idea is to have an external assessment team of practitioners and university faculty members begin an equity assessment of a school by reviewing the school's equity portfolio. Based on their review of the portfolio as well as their own assessment activities (conversations with stakeholders, observations, and so on), the visiting team provides the school with feedback on its efforts. A related idea is to form regional equity and social justice networks that organize and coordinate external assessment teams for member schools. Equity networks also can establish communication channels enabling schools in different districts to share equity portfolios, strategies, materials, and so on.

Principal preparation programs can help students develop skills for facilitating equity self-studies, action plans, and portfolios as well as participating in equity networks. Field projects might include participating in a school equity assessment or portfolio development team or—depending on the level of expertise the student has developed—serving on an external equity assessment team.

2.2 Implications for Practice and Research

When we discuss development of principal preparation programs, members of the educational leadership faculty become the "practitioners." The first step in consideration of the model described here is considerable dialogue on how it might be used as a guide for program development. The seven components of the model are so interrelated that they need to be implemented together, however program development can still be incremental, with the model gradually applied to different aspects of program content, delivery, and assessment. Initially, action research by program faculty is the best way to explore how to apply the model. Faculty can discuss how the model can be adapted to the local program's context and students, try out ideas on a small scale, gather data on effects, and reflect on progress and next steps. Formal program revisions can follow action research and reflective dialogue on potential changes. Although program change can be gradual, steady movement toward *program coherence* is essential: recruitment, courses, field experiences, student assessment and program self-assessment all must be moving toward consistency with each other for real program improvement.

Although action research is an excellent vehicle for program development, traditional qualitative and quantitative research on educational leadership preparation for equity and social justice also has an important role to play. Earlier in this article I cited institutional isomorphism in the field of educational leadership as a barrier to making principal preparation programs more focused on equity and social justice. To eliminate this barrier, other institutions within the field that make or influence policy must be shown the value of integrating equity and social justice in preparation programs. Traditional research on the effects of preparing principals to be leaders for equity and social justice can influence the way other institutions within the organizational field value such preparation. Using research to influence policy makers, of course, is not a new idea; four decades ago, Barry (1972) discussed the research-policy connection:

> Perhaps the most important influence of research is through its effect on the way policy-makers look at the world. It influences what they regard as fact or fiction; the problems they see and do not see; the interpretations they regard as plausible or nonsensical; the judgments they make as to whether a policy is potentially effective or irrelevant or worse (p.79).

The scope of faculty research, then, should include both action research for program reform and, eventually, traditional research on the effects of that reform.

2.3 Conclusion

Developing a program that prepares principals to be leaders for equity and social justice is a significant challenge, especially when one considers all of the other responsibilities we are expected to prepare principals for. Moreover, much that principals need to know, value, and be able to do in the arena of equity and social justice requires students to engage in extensive field experiences in school or community settings—experiences intended to assist with praxis. Beyond clinical experiences integrated with regular courses, a yearlong internship seems warranted. Finally, universities and school districts that do not already do so should consider partnering to develop principal induction programs that provide support to school leaders for up to the first three years of their careers. Most principal preparation programs, thus, will need to do fairly extensive reprioritizing and restructuring in order to properly address diversity. However, it is difficult to think of any goal that should receive a higher priority than equity and social justice for our nation's children.

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[3]See the file at <http://cnx.org/content/m43705/latest/Gordon_References.pdf>

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Beyond Convention, Beyond Critique: Toward a Third Way of Preparing Educational Leaders to Promote Equity and Social Justice

The author begins this article with a brief review of the reasons educational leaders and schools need to promote equity and social justice. The article then critiques two approaches to educational leadership as inadequate for preparing educational leaders to foster equity and social justice. The conventional approach to both educational leadership and the preparation of educational leaders is characterized by external control, technical rationality, and maintenance of the status quo, characteristics that are incompatible with the preparation of transformational leaders. The critical approach, although contributing to awareness of inequity and its negative effects as well as the power of assets-based education and empowerment, also possesses a number of characteristics that make it inappropriate as the primary focus of leadership preparation. Stephen P. Gordon, Professor of Education and Community Leadership, CLAS Department, Texas State University